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Aileen C. Hernandez
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Daniel Collins
Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, Inc.
1001 Polk Street
San Francisco, CA. 94102

Dear Dan:

I ordinarily do not get myself into this position, but I feel so strongly about the qualifications of this young woman that I am breaking a cardinal rule---and interfering.

Sahwan has applied for a position as Design Assistant at Harcourt and was interviewed recently. She apparently made a very good impression, but was told that they wanted someone with "more book publishing experience." I was outraged, because, as you can see from her innovative resume, she is a person who is truly multi-talented. Her resume shows her diversity; she is a fine artist, photographer, graphics designer, layout specialist---you name it, and she has done it if it is in the graphics field. Sahwan has chosen to limit her resume only to the jobs she has held, but I would like to add the thousands of things she has done as a volunteer for community groups and for friends. Almost since she arrived in San Francisco she has been very active in Black Women Organized for Action---she designed the organization's brochure, worked on virtually every issue of the newsletter over the five-year period, created the posters for our health fair and for many other activities and, in general, gave unselfishly and creatively of her time. When called on, she responds, and when she sees a need, she volunteers.

Outside of BWOA activities, Sahwan has been equally generous. As you know I am a principal in a publishing company - Sapphire Publishing Company, Inc. - and we asked Sahwan to help us in designing the cover for one of our books on "nontraditional education"; she did so, and for far less than her talents should have commanded. She has just completed a "labor of friendship" for Ahimsa Sumchai, a talented poet who is on the way to a distinguished medical career. Sahwan has designed and done the graphic layout for a new book of poetry by Ahimsa.

Sahwan has paid her dues and done her apprenticeship; she now wishes to find a job which will expand her horizons and give her the opportunity to learn, and at the same time give. She needs this opportunity, and I think Harcourt needs her. Whatever is necessary to absorb to be able to claim "book publishing experience", Sahwan will absorb in very short order; she is a quick study. But she will also give to Harcourt of her talent, creativity and energy---and that is no small gift. I think it would be a real mistake to let her slip through your fingers.

Will you do what you can? I hope you will be able to make the "powers that be" at Harcourt understand that a young woman like Sahwan is rare; she needs to be nurtured, not given the "professional shuffle."

Warmest regards.

-Aileen

P.S. Excuse the typing---which is not my strong point!